



February 16, 2016

Jeffrey Katz, PA-C, DFAAPA
Gail Curtis, MPAS, PA-C, DFAAPA
c/o AAPA
2318 Mill Rd., Ste. 1300
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mr. Katz and Ms. Curtis:

At its recent meeting, the NCCPA Board of Directors revisited the status of efforts to inform our eventual decision regarding whether or not to adopt the proposed recertification exam model under consideration. Considering the breadth of perspectives that are needed to best inform the NCCPA Board's decision, including that of the AAPA, the Board decided to honor your request and extend the public comment period to June 15, 2016.

In the interest of promoting informed dialogue and discourse about this issue – one of great significance to the PA profession and to other stakeholders who rely on the PA-C credential that the NCCPA confers – we ask you to support our effort to elicit relevant feedback in the following areas:

- 1. House of Delegates:** To promote fairness and an informed debate, as well as to ensure the debate is based on facts, we request the opportunity to make a 20-minute presentation to the House prior to its deliberation on the proposed changes to the recertification process. Also, we would extend the offer to have an NCCPA representative available to be on call for the reference committee considering resolutions related to NCCPA's recertification process to answer questions that arise during their deliberations. So we may plan and prepare, we would appreciate your response to this issue by March 1. Out of respect for the Academy's HOD process, we do not plan to provide testimony on the floor of the House unless explicitly invited to do so by Speaker Curtis. In the interest of transparency, our response to such an invitation, if extended, is based in part on our assessment of whether or not the Academy leadership elects to elevate the tenor of its response strategy to that of civil and informed discourse on a matter on which divergent opinions and organizational priorities may in fact exist. Part of that assessment will include the response to the requests to follow.
- 2. Timely publication of an NCCPA response to recent JAAPA editorial:** We would appreciate your help in securing a commitment from JAAPA to publish an NCCPA response to "Unraveling the Recertification Conundrum" in the April issue. We can provide that editorial before the end of February. We understand that JAAPA is not under your direct editorial control, but we trust you have sufficient influence with your journal that you will want to facilitate this process in the interest of assisting delegates during their discussions and deliberations.
- 3. Ensuring a thoughtful and respectful dialogue:** We welcome the opportunity for an informed discussion and debate on this critical issue for our profession. We are committed to moving forward with integrity and transparency throughout this process. Many of you are well aware of the actions taken to elicit response and the efforts we've made to encourage dialogue with your board of directors as well as the PA community as a whole. We believe these are the actions of

an organization that is genuinely interested in the participation and preferences of certified PAs in this process.

- 4. Contribution of AAPA data:** We remain hopeful that your professional staff will inform our discussions with data and information in support of any concerns AAPA has about the model under consideration. In particular, on January 21 we asked you to provide any evidence and data you have to support your concern about the potential for future impediments to PA mobility and regulation of the profession. The purpose of the public comment period was to allow for the collection of such evidence and informed feedback, and we ask for your support of that effort. Information provided by April 1 could inform our Board's next scheduled discussion on this issue.

The genesis of our work on the evidence-based development of a new approach to the recertification process was incontrovertible NCCPA data that demonstrates that PA practice has changed. PAs are not only working in specialty areas, but they are working as specialists –not as generalists – in those specialty areas. That does not *mandate* specialty certification, and we *are not proposing* specialty certification. Our focus and intent was based on the principle of integrating to a greater degree assessment of what PAs are actually doing in practice into a *generalist recertification process* based on feedback and the increasing number of requests we have received from many of our certificants and our obligation to the public and other stakeholders.

Based on the totality of the data gathering and perspectives we have sought during the last 18 months, we believe that many stand to gain from this model:

- **All PAs** who believe it important to maintain a general fund of knowledge and/or who may want to one day change specialties. This model will support better knowledge retention and help PAs stay up-to-date across the spectrum of medicine to a much greater degree than the existing process.
- **All PAs** who would prefer the opportunity to focus exam preparation on content more closely related to their practice.
- **All PAs** who would benefit from an approach that accommodates different learning styles and who would benefit from the opportunity for remediation through CME rather than retesting.
- **Patients** who want assurance that the PAs to whom they have entrusted their care are maintaining current knowledge relevant to their practice.
- **Employers and payers** who rely on the PA-C to represent relevant assessment of PAs' continuous professional development and knowledge.

As we said in our last letter, ultimately our Board will weigh what we know about the current clinical practice of certified PAs and review the input received throughout this public comment period as we aim to fulfill our obligations as an effective and responsible certifying body. We want to reiterate that NCCPA is still actively engaged in the information gathering stage of our process and recognize there are different opinions. However, we also hope that as our professional colleagues you will contribute by facilitating a well-informed House of Delegates discussion, emphasizing that reasonable people can agree to disagree respectfully, moderating your public discourse on this topic, and contributing your own data and evidence.

We continue to invite an exchange of information and dialogue with you and other AAPA leaders on this topic.

Sincerely,



Denni Woodmansee, MS, PA-C
NCCPA Board Chair



Dawn Morton-Rias, Ed.D, PA-C
NCCPA President/CEO

CC: Jenna Dorn, MPA, AAPA CEO
NCCPA Board of Directors
AAPA Board of Directors
Constituent organization leaders